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ABSTRACT

The Bureau for Africa of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been examining in detail the question of how best to support and sustain sectorwide education reform in Africa. The USAID and Education Commission of the States jointly sponsored a seminar in October 1996 to examine the issue of "scaling up" and to bring together different perspectives on how to address the problem directly. The "scale-up" problem refers to the failure of reforms to become widespread. In particular, the seminar examined the approach developed by USAID and assessed its applicability for addressing the scale-up problem in American education. This paper presents the core set of elements developed for a scaling-up strategy. It describes the various modes of development assistance to developing nations (the project mode, the policy analytical mode, and the nonproject mode), identifies the fundamental features of reform, offers a model for explicating the scale-up problem, discusses the tools and techniques needed to support education reform, and examines ways in which the roles of public- and private-sector institutions can be redefined. One figure and 34 footnotes are included. (LMI)

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Education Reform Support: A Framework for Scaling Up School Reform

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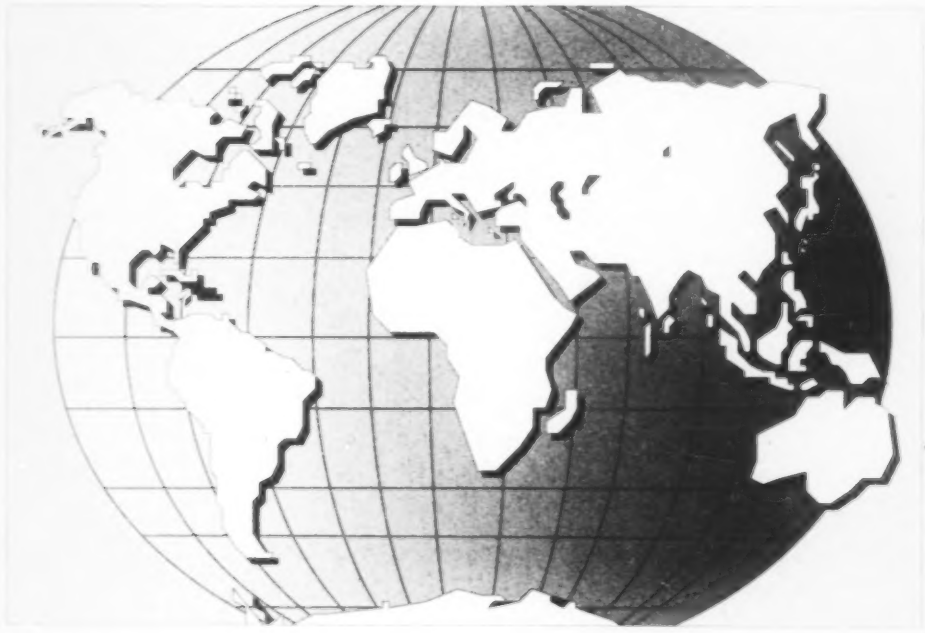
June 1997



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Education Reform Support:
A Framework for Scaling Up School Reform

prepared by

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June 1997

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1. Foreword

This paper grew, in part, out of the Education Commission of the States' (ECS) commitment two years ago to the emerging issue of "scale-up" of reform. ECS has long seen the importance of trying to help bridge the gap between pilot initiatives based at the school level, and the need to reform state education systems on a large scale. The *Re:Learning* Project was an example of an experiment aimed at promoting change "from the schoolhouse to the statehouse." That joint effort with the Coalition of Essential Schools helped underscore, among other things, the importance of addressing the policy environment and garnering broad-based engagement and political-economic support for reform to occur statewide.

Concomitantly, the Bureau for Africa of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been examining in detail the question of how best to support and effect sustained sector-wide education reform in Africa. Through the Advancing Basic Education and Literacy (ABEL) Project, the USAID Bureau for Africa has reviewed experience in reform support as well as literature on this topic, and has formulated a comprehensive approach to help bring about system-wide change in education.

Becoming aware of the obvious conjunction of these efforts, USAID and ECS agreed to jointly sponsor a two-day seminar on October 21 and 22, 1996. The purpose of the seminar was to examine the issue of scale-up and to bring together different experiences and perspectives on how to address it directly. In particular, the seminar examined the approach developed by USAID, and assessed it specifically for its applicability as a strategic framework for addressing the scale-up problem in the United States[1], against a backdrop of school reform and scale-up experiences at the school, district, and state levels. Just as many school reform initiatives are discerning a core of basic principles for effective educational practice, the seminar attempted to build consensus around a set of core elements for a scaling-up strategy. This paper presents this core set of elements.

2. The U.S. School Reform Movement and the Scale-up Problem

> "After a lot of years of trying to improve schools, we don't have one district of any size or diversity of population where good schools are the norm, not the exception. And that runs contrary to the fact that we know how to create good schools."
>
> "I've been all over the country. When I visit schools, the question always comes up, 'Why is the school next door not emulating what's going on at this school?' There's just a built-in resistance to change."
>
> "Once reformers strove to change a handful of schools to demonstrate that education could look and feel different. Now they are increasingly worried about how to spread effective

[1] We note, however, that the approach has applicability for scale-up in most any situation.

practices broadly and deeply. They want to bring about high levels of student learning in large numbers of schools, not just a few. But to achieve change in the numbers desired, reformers need a whole new set of strategies."

These quotes, which were taken from *Education Week's* series called "Scaling Up," epitomize certain aspects of the scale-up problem. On the surface, they characterize it. After nearly two decades of concerted school reform effort, fewer than 5%[2] of the schools in the United States have changed what Richard Elmore[3] refers to as "core educational practices." These quotes also express some of the deep frustration school reformers have experienced in attempting to scale up their particular reform efforts. Indeed, *why is it* that educationally dysfunctional schools can be found within a few blocks of schools that are on the cutting edge of good educational practice?

There is a peculiar irony to school reform, the existence of which lends insight into the nature of the scale-up problem. As implied above, pockets of good educational practice can be found almost *anywhere*, signifying that good education is not a matter of esoteric knowledge. Be it the result of innovative teachers, the elite status of some parents, maverick principals, or progressive communities, localized pockets of effective educational innovation can be found throughout the world, often in poor material circumstances.

Nevertheless, good educational practice cannot be found *everywhere*. The incidence of usage of the available knowledge, and the rate of spread of effective practices, is grievously low. Moreover, educational innovations often have a short shelf-life. Either the innovative teacher leaves the system, the enlightened principal gets burned out, or the progressive community simply loses interest after finding no resonance of support within the bureaucracy. Reformers frequently assume that the problem is one of insufficient information or a lack of knowledge. Others are of the opinion that inadequate funding is the binding constraint, but most of the evidence implies that education systems throughout the world could do a great deal more with the resources they already have.[4]

Accordingly, most school reform initiatives are, in one sense or another, "demonstration" projects that are designed to generate concrete information about good educational and pedagogical practice. And in fact, these pilot project often do provide models of what schools

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[2]This is a liberal estimate. One person quoted in the "Scaling Up" series figured this value to be less than 1%.

[3]R.E. Elmore (1996), "Getting to Scale with Good Educational Practice," *Harvard Education Review*, 66 (1), 1-25.

[4]L.A. Crouch and F.H. Healey (1997), *Education Reform Support. Volume One: Overview and Bibliography*, SD Publication Series, Paper No. 47 (Washington, DC: Office of Sustainable Development, Bureau for Africa, United States Agency for International Development).

and school districts need to do. However, the "information assumption[5]" on which most of this activity is based is contradicted by the following realities: (1) one often finds good practice in locales that are quite distant from various information centers—one can find effective schools run by principals who have not read the latest school reform literature; (2) demonstration projects frequently regress; and (3) as noted earlier, one can regularly find effective schools just a few miles away from rather dysfunctional ones, and, worse yet, most everyone in the neighborhoods involved knows about it.[6]

The above quotes also reveal some of the misconceptions people have about school reform in general. In particular, if school reformers really did know how to create good schools, the scale-up problem probably would not exist. We deduce that many school reformers in fact do not know how: Witness the "information assumption" mentioned earlier. This is not to say that these reformers don't know what constitutes *good schooling*. Indeed, they do. What it does say, however, is that there is more to making a good school than good schooling.

Unfortunately, the U.S. school reform movement has largely focused on good schooling. Millions of dollars have been spent trying to fine-tune our knowledge of how children learn and how best to facilitate their learning. Equally large sums of money have been spent trying to figure out exactly what America's children need to learn to be able to compete in the global economy of the 21st century. As a result of all of this effort, our knowledge about good schooling has evolved tremendously. *Yet educational mediocrity endures.*

Granted, some of the U.S. school reform movement's attention has been directed toward understanding what, apart from good schooling, is required to bring about good schools. Local control, accountability, school choice, vouchers, charter schools, and privatization have all been offered, or at least perceived, as magic bullets which, if fired off, would somehow right the wrongs of American education. The sarcastic tone in which this observation is made is not meant to suggest that devolution and market forces (e.g., school choice) have no place in reforming America's ailing education systems. Quite the contrary, American education desperately needs both. What it is meant to convey is first, that there are no magic bullets; and second, that neither devolution nor market forces will, in and of themselves, bring about good schools.

Witness the following: Vouchers are not in widespread use, school choice and charter schools are the exception rather than the rule, and linkages that keep producers and consumers accountable to each other are still very weak. In short, devolution of authority and market forces are being resisted in much the same way as good schooling is being resisted. This point strongly suggests that it takes *more* than a few good ideas to create good schools. What, then, does it take? Let us

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[5]The information assumption is defined on page 7. Briefly, it states that insufficient and/or inadequate information is the root cause of many reform efforts not taking hold or scaling-up.

[6]Crouch and Healey (1997).

look at the past 30-plus years of educational development activity in the developing world to gain some useful insights.

3. Lessons from the Developing World

Since the 1960s, donors have provided both technical and financial assistance to education systems throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Over the years, real progress has been made, mostly in terms of the expansion of access to primary and secondary education for increasingly greater numbers of children in the developing world. (Building schools and hiring teachers, while costly, are hardly the most technically challenging elements of education reform.) During the same period, however, donor projects did address more than the physical expansion of schooling. Time and again, donor funding has supported the well-known spectrum of technical improvements: teacher training, curriculum development, materials design and production, examination reform, assessment, educational planning, etc.

In most countries there could be no pretense that donors would provide enough capital to solve all the problems of the education sector in perpetuity. Most projects were, therefore, "pilot" in nature; their technological innovations (even the simple tasks of funding construction and hiring of teachers) were intended to be replicated and sustained by the host countries themselves. The record of such projects has been soundly criticized in the development profession. Judging in terms of the sustainability of the project interventions, several evaluations have indicated that at best half of such efforts have been sustained; another type of reckoning indicated only one in ten.[7]

The reasons for the lack of sustainability of most project interventions go back to the very assumptions on which much of the donor assistance was originally predicated. And to their credit, donor institutions over time have responded to the need to modify those original assumptions. A review of the evolution of donor approaches to supporting educational development, in fact, provides the lessons that today constitute the hope for rectifying the current situation not only in places like sub-Saharan Africa, but also in the United States as well.

The Project Mode of Development Assistance

Initially, development assistance was largely *project-oriented*. The defining paradigm for this mode of development assistance grew out of the success of the Marshall Plan in rebuilding Europe. It assumed that what developing countries lacked was the capital and technical know-how to address, in this case, their educational needs. Education projects therefore emphasized the "detailed identification and costing of project inputs and the careful planning for their timely

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[7]Derik Brinkerhoff and Arthur Goldsmith (1992), "Promoting the Sustainability of Development Institutions: A Framework for Strategy," *World Development 20* (3).

delivery over a four- to six-year period."[8] Moreover, they "occurred" in total isolation from the policy environment. Donors would arrive at a particular educational situation, identify a specific need (such as classroom construction, teacher training, curriculum design), and design a project aimed at meeting that need within a limited time frame.

The dominant thinking behind this mode of development was that if the particular need, or set of needs, was met, educational development would "take off" in much the same way that a person's health improves after a physician tends to an ailment. Unfortunately, this thinking was flawed—educational takeoff, for the most part, has yet to occur.

Behind this thinking was a set of assumptions which proved, in most instances, to be incorrect. The assumptions were: (1) that educational technology was a limiting factor to educational development; (2) that finances were a key constraint; (3) that projects could be standardized and transferred across a large number of beneficiary groups, yielding essentially the same outcomes; and (4) that governments are rational and goal-oriented institutions, pursuing policies to maximize economic or social returns.[9]

The fact was, however, that educational technology was not the bottleneck it was thought to be. As observed earlier, pockets of good educational practice can be found almost anywhere, even in remote rural regions of sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, in countries such as Egypt, India, and Pakistan, the technological wherewithal exists to produce highly sophisticated military armaments. Certainly, if developing countries can produce high-tech fighter jets and nuclear weapons, the technological requirements of educating their children cannot be that enigmatic.

The same points hold for the second assumption—that finances were a key constraint. First of all, educational practice can improve significantly with just a little additional money. Secondly, if countries have the money to devote to such "high priorities" as defense, then clearly, finances are not as big a constraint as the donors initially believed. Granted, there are some very poor countries in the developing world that need financial assistance. The point remains, however, that if a country's political and social will were mobilized on behalf of widespread education reform, even these very poor countries could do much more educationally with the national resources they already have.[10]

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[8]Adriaan Verspoor (1989), *Pathways to Change: Improving the Quality of Education in Developing Countries*, World Bank Discussion Paper No. 53 (Washington, DC: World Bank), p. 145.

[9]Verspoor (1989), p. 145.

[10]A simple model of education reform shows the following:

$$E/C = E/I * I/EX * EX/GDP * GDP/POP * POP/C,$$

where

That successful innovations proved not to be easily transferable belies the assumption that what works in one school has application and relevance for other schools. And with regard to the belief that governments (be they of the developing world or the developed world) are rational organizations aimed at maximizing both the economic and social welfare of the country, both history and common sense have clearly demonstrated that public sector entities are complexes of competing interest groups operating to maximize their own welfare.[11]

Over the years it has become increasingly clear that in Africa certainly, and in some parts of Latin America and Asia, the binding constraints to successful educational development are neither the transfer of funds nor the supply of educational "technology." Countries (all countries, not just developing ones) can make real progress by making better use of whatever funds and

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E/C= reform (amount of **E**ducation per **C**hild),

E/I = efficiency (amount of **E**ducation one can squeeze out of a certain set of **I**nputs),

I/EX = educational input package, unit cost-**E**ducational e**X**penditures-of **I**nputs (what one buys with the financial resources devoted to education),

EX/GDP = political and social will (**E**ducational e**X**penditure as a proportion of gross domestic product, or **GDP**),

GDP/POP = wealth of the nation (**GDP** per capita/**POP**ulation), and

POP/C = age structure of the nation (proportion of **C**hildren in the total **POP**ualtion).

What this model says is that education reform (E/C) is the product of efficiency (E/I), unit cost (I/EX), political and social will (EX/GDP), the wealth of the nation (GDP/POP), and the nation's age structure (POP/C). Accordingly, any increase in one will lead to an overall increase in the amount of education each child receives. What this model also says is that education reform (E/C) is not entirely the direct responsibility of the education sector. Most education officials, for example, have little control over the age structure of the nation. Nor do they have much direct control over the wealth of the nation.

Because this is a multiplicative relationship, a 20% improvement in each factor will yield a 250% improvement in education reform (E/C).

$$1 = 1 * 1 * 1 * 1 * 1$$

$$2.5 = 1.2 * 1.2 * 1.2 * 1.2 * 1.2$$

To bring about the same 250% improvement in education reform by improving only those factors over which education authorities have some direct control requires a 60% improvement in each.

$$2.5 = 1.6 * 1.6 * 1 * 1 * 1$$

What this illustrates is that it is far easier to bring about education reform if it is addressed on *all* fronts, making education reform a national issue, not just an educational one.

[11]This is the fundamental premise of public-choice theory.

pedagogical technology already exist. The failure to adopt and then spread and adapt these "technologies," and to adequately finance their implementation and continued adaptation, has been a result of deficient educational policy and management environments.

The Policy-Analytical Mode of Development Assistance

One way of addressing policy and management issues—those that define the context within which education change does (or does not) go to scale and is (or is not) sustained—has been to directly provide policy and management technical assistance. Projects that intended to transfer techniques in the areas of management information system development, policy analysis, sectoral management, and administration have been tried. These projects could be considered the policy-level equivalent of technical fixes. The assumption was that negative policy environments (i.e., unfavorable educational contexts) were the result of policy mistakes—decisions made on the basis of poor data and weak analysis. Accordingly, donor institutions felt that good information and analysis would be enough to turn these mistakes around. The demand for analysis was taken for granted, and where it did not exist, few attempts were made to create it. And rare, if not non-existent, are bureaucrats who will invest effort into making highly rational, transparent decisions when the prevailing decision dynamic serves their rent-seeking, pork-barrel, and political empire-building needs so well.

That the political economy of education was not considered has significant bearing on the ultimate fate of most donor-supported policy analysis initiatives. Enormous amounts of information were generated, much of it very good. The problem, however, was that the production of this information had little impact on bringing about the desired reforms. Ultimately, because there was no real demand for the information that was being generated, when donor support for the supply of this information subsided with the hope that the host-countries would pick up the slack, the policy analysis initiatives ultimately died.

The Non-Project Mode of Development Assistance

Against the backdrop of the shortcomings of both traditional projects and packages of policy analysis and management technical assistance, it became apparent to the donor community that developing-country leaders needed to be engaged in education sector policy and governance issues. Accordingly, donor interest over the past 15 years has been directed toward policy-based "program" and "non-project" assistance (we apologize for this onslaught of donor jargon). These approaches try to elicit changes in sectoral policies and priorities by imposing *conditionalities* tied to the *transfer of funds*. In the macroeconomic arena, donors believed that if they tied market-oriented conditions to non-project assistance, that assistance automatically would lead to badly needed policy reform and structural change in developing countries.

In the education sector, donors assumed that they could broker broad government support for structural and institutional changes in the sectoral environment by promising annual disbursements to the host government's general budget. If the policy changes took place (or,

more accurately, if the host government could present evidence that they had taken place), then the government had met the conditions for disbursement. Conditionalities—tied to cash transfers—have included changes in such matters as education's share of the national budget (e.g., either an increase or decrease), intra-sectoral spending priorities (e.g., increase in the amount of the education budget going to primary and secondary, with a simultaneous decrease in the amount spent on post-secondary education), and gender-oriented policies (e.g., increase in support for girls' education).

There are some examples of successful policy and institutional changes in the education sector brought about through donor use of conditionality. However, far more numerous examples demonstrate the limitations of this approach. Furthermore, whether the reforms realized in conjunction with conditionality are a direct result of the donor conditions or of the prevailing political-economy of reform in the countries remains an open question (as does the question of whether the reforms themselves will ultimately be sustained in the absence of donor promises of funding).

The use of conditionality has also tended to be "top down" or "front-end loaded." The emphasis has been on identifying the issues to be addressed through conditionality and on initiating reform. Donors have paid little attention to the implementation challenges associated with sustaining reform, and have avoided addressing the implications those reforms would have for various stakeholders. A summary of experience with conditionality could conclude that donor efforts have often generated "partial reform" wherein the willingness to initiate reform measures is not supplemented by the means to carry them through.[12]

One reading of the experience and literature on conditionality concludes that conditionality is limited in the absence of (1) true dialogue among host-country stakeholders about the substance of the changes rather than just the indicators that would constitute acceptable evidence, and (2) internal pressure and backing for the reforms. Conditionality without these two aspects is unlikely to achieve much in the way of reform, and these two features of a political-economic environment could achieve a great deal, even without conditionality-based donor funding. USAID's own review of its experience using conditionality in support of education reform indicates the importance of local dialogue and reform advocacy in overcoming the limitations associated with externally imposed conditions.

4. The Fundamental Features of Reform

From these experiences, we can derive a number of lessons which suggest that there are some fundamental features of reform. For example, we maintain that reform should, ideally, be

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[12]David Gordon and Carol Lancaster (1994), *The Implications of Political Change in Africa for the Special Program for Africa (SPA) Donors,* Implementing Policy Change Project, Working Paper No. 7 (Washington, DC: USAID).

approached *systemically*. The numerous aspects of an education system relate to each other variously. Changes in some areas of the education system have impacts that ripple through certain other facets of the system. Other changes require commensurate transformations to take place elsewhere in the system. The fact is, that an education system is just that—a system. Accordingly, reform should not be approached in a piecemeal fashion, lest the effort dissipate.

Reform should also be *demand-driven*. The people most affected by reform not only should want change, but also must want to change. Moreover, they should attach themselves to a particular vision of reform. This being the case, if neither the demand nor the vision for reform exists, efforts need to be undertaken to generate them.

The argument that reform should be demand-driven strongly suggests that the specific "answers" that constitute reform should be homegrown. *Local answers* not only address specific educational needs and aspirations, but also engender a sense of *ownership* that enhances the overall implementability of reform. Significant *parent and public engagement* is essential. Clearly, if reform is about deriving local answers, widespread participation among stakeholders is a requirement. Teachers, parents, and students should all take part in the design, development, and implementation of solutions aimed at improving their specific educational situation. Accordingly, *school-based decision making* would appear to be essential.

To ensure that this plurality of local answers[13] comprises both statewide and nationwide mosaics[14], the system needs to establish *standards* that are at once broad and clear, *outcome metrics* that are both understandable and an environment of *accountability for results*. To this end, *market forces* need to be introduced to the system. Educational consumers need to be able to choose among schools for purposes of improving both the quality and relevance of the services offered. Implicit here is the need for *restructuring*, and with that, the creation of *new working relationships* such that the education system supports children learning, as opposed to supporting bureaucratic interests and political whim.

Inasmuch as there are endogenous answers, there are *no magic bullets*. Because knowledge is imperfect, and because people's educational needs and aspirations vary both in time and in space, answers must be continually pursued. Moreover, success will require thoughtful and coherent combinations of strategies and interventions.

From what we have said thus far, it is evident that reform should be viewed as an *ongoing* phenomenon. It should not be seen as something that is "accomplished," say, after a 10-year, multimillion-dollar intervention. Furthermore, if each successive state of reform is to be an improvement over the previous situation, both *information* and *learning* have to be regarded as

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[13]We assume that in a heterogeneous society, there would be such a plurality of local answers.

[14]The imagery here is meant to convey the notion of a larger education system that is comprised of many: *E Pluribus Unum*.

integral to almost any reform process. Against this backdrop, we maintain that the entire education system should be considered a *learning organization*.

Needed, then, are the structures and procedures that can both accommodate and facilitate meaningful change and reform-specific learning. Accordingly, *democratic institutions* wherein wide cross-sections of stakeholders can actively participate in *informed deliberations* over alternative views, visions, and means, should be viewed as the vectors of learning-driven reform.

Equally important are *external normative structures* for the practice of teaching. These structures are the foundation for an *incentive system* that contributes to institutionalizing professional, reflective practice on the part of educators.[15] Teachers need to see themselves as operating within a professional environment that supports and encourages improvement in the real practice of teaching (*not* credentialism). Likewise, professional norms and incentives are crucial to encouraging educational administrators and decision makers to redefine their roles and actually change their behavior.

Of central importance to this vision of reform is the need to both account for and use the *political economy* of education. That education presently fails to address the learning needs of every child points to the fact that the primary interests of the dominant forces within the political economy do not coincide with those of the children. Furthermore, to the extent that education reform threatens the status quo of education, these dominant forces will actively work against it. To effect widespread reform in an environment that is largely hostile to it will require altering the political economy of education such that the voiceless (i.e., schoolchildren) have more, if not a dominant, voice. It will also require wide acceptance of the fact that school reformers are *themselves* a part of the political economy of education, and as such, they can be as much a part of the scale-up problem as any other interest group.

The reform arena is cluttered with reform wares: networks, initiatives, projects, and models. Some are good, some bad, but each vendor has something to sell, and therefore they all have an interest that is not *necessarily* aligned with that of the children. Needed are the mechanisms through which local consumers (i.e., schools, teachers, parents) can assess the quality and relevance of each product, and the means by which they can piece together a program that best addresses their educational needs and aspirations.

Finally, it is evident by now that reform will not take place on its own accord. Demand has to be generated, learning has to be facilitated, endogenous answers have to be obtained, institutions have to be built, technical capacity has to be transferred, information has to be gathered, and political-economic strategies have to be pursued. Succinctly put, reform must be *facilitated*—by agents of change working together to effect reform's various processes. To this end, we speak of the need for a *reform support infrastructure*, or loosely organized entities working together to make ongoing reform happen.

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[15]Elmore, (1996).

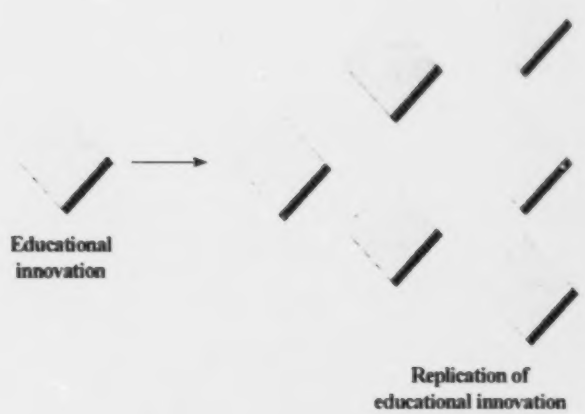
5. Further Explicating the Scale-Up Problem

Given this understanding of reform, we return to the scale-up problem and ask the following questions: What, exactly, is it that should go to scale? Why is it that reform does not go to scale? The two are not unrelated.

What Should Go to Scale?

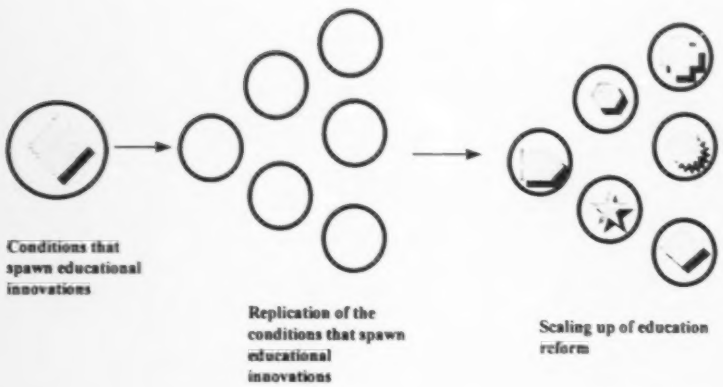
Many efforts to replicate successful innovations meet with modest success at best. We suggest that this is so because the wrong thing—the reform itself—is being replicated (see Figure 1). Reflecting back on the fundamental features of reform, we can deduce that success stories *are* success stories because: (1) the reform addresses a well-understood local need, (2) there is a significant local demand for the reform, (3) the reform itself is locally derived, (4) it is championed by one or more "messiahs," (5) it is adequately financed, and (6) there is widespread ownership of the reform. Attempting to replicate the reform itself (i.e., take it to scale) *inevitably* violates some of the very conditions that render certain innovations successful in the first place. The fact is that people's educational aspirations, needs, and contexts differ from place to place. Accordingly, what works in one location won't necessarily work in another. And even in those instances where an "outside" innovation addresses some of the specific needs and aspirations of a particular location, its fate is still precarious, for unless there is widespread ownership of the innovation (a factor largely engendered through the development of local solutions), chances are that it will not become a permanent feature of that location's educational landscape.

Figure 1. Schematic diagram:
Replicating reforms



Instead of replication of the reform itself, we contend that it is the *conditions which give rise to the reform in the first place* that should be replicated (see Figure 2). We maintain that by doing so, reformers not only improve the prospects of education/school reform going to scale, but also create a reform environment that will spawn multiple innovations, and with that, the potential for significant knowledge sharing. What is needed, then, are the tools, techniques, structures, mechanisms, and institutions that can (1) help generate widespread demand for reforms, (2) facilitate an informed localized deliberation over the substance and character of reform, (3) create a policy environment that is hospitable to whole-school change, and (4) safeguard the phenomenon of ongoing, learning-driven change (see Section 7).

Figure 2. Schematic diagram: Replicating conditions that lead to reform


Conditions that spawn educational innovations
Replication of the conditions that spawn educational innovations
Scaling up of education reform

Why Does Reform Not Go to Scale?

That the wrong thing often gets replicated explains, in part, why even widely accepted reforms often fail to go to scale. And if ever there were a time when the work of education reform was easy, those days and those tasks are well behind us. In truth, the work of fundamental change is never easy and seldom quick. The forces arrayed against it, intentionally or not, are both powerful and entrenched. What are those forces?

Widespread *knowledge gaps* regarding both the character of education and the nature of education reform are a powerful force that stands in the way of school reform going to scale. That most stakeholders don't understand the systemic nature of an education system, or know the financial constraints within which an education system must responsibly operate, or appreciate the long-term implications of adopting certain policy initiatives, suggests that unless the public's

learning about education and education reform is strategically facilitated, scaling-up will remain an elusive goal for the U.S. school reform movement. Moreover, many bureaucrats lack the technical skills to fill these knowledge gaps. Likewise, people's *mental models*[16] also stand in the way of scale-up. Parents' vision of education is often shaped by the manner in which it was practiced when they were in school. Practitioners often cannot visualize how teaching and schools can be organized differently. Policy making is too often rigidly characterized by piecemeal solutions, solutions for the "crisis of the day," distributive politics, top-down regulations with too little local and public engagement, and inadequate attention to results. Schools tend not to see the importance of policy, and policy makers often fail to understand how their decisions play themselves out at the school level.

Certain *laws and statutes* also obstruct efforts to scale-up, as do sundry *bureaucratic rules and regulations,* and *union contracts*. The fact that in most locations, for example, parents cannot choose the schools to which they will send their children, severely limits the degree to which market forces can help to catalyze widespread school reform. The *inertia* of the bureaucracy itself and what can be characterized among most teachers as "reform fatigue" make it difficult to motivate the system to change. Also standing in the way of scaling-up initiatives are various *governance arrangements*. For example, because so little meaningful decision-making authority resides in the classroom, teachers' ability to individualize the curriculum is severely limited.

In addition, there is the *absence of clear, high academic standards* aligned with assessment systems that are owned at the local level and linked to accountability mechanisms that allow schools to know what they want to achieve, where they are with respect to those objectives, and whether their efforts are making a difference. Just as the absence of standards diminishes the incentive for students to learn and teachers to improve their instruction, *the lack of strong professional and social normative structures and a set of incentives operating within those structures* makes it extremely difficult to bring about needed changes in attitudes and behaviors throughout the system.[17] In fact, the normative structures and incentives that by default exist in today's education systems can be characterized as "perverse," for they often actually punish innovation and departure from the status quo while rewarding lethargy and "toeing the line."

Finally, the *political economy of education* stands as a major obstacle to scale-up. The status quo in education is a well-guarded dynamic. Any threat to an interest group's perceived or real beneficial station within the status quo will evoke a response aimed at either safeguarding or advancing that interest group's station. Against this backdrop, it is easy to see why educational innovations can exist in pockets: At that level, they are not a threat to the status quo. Accordingly, to the extent that the status quo is not threatened, waivers can be provided, charters can be granted, and rule-breaking can be overlooked. The reliance on waivers is, in fact, a way to

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[16]This term was borrowed from Peter Senge (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday Currency).

[17]Elmore, (1996).

avoid confronting the interests protecting the status quo (per one of the lessons of the *Re:Learning* Project). It is also easy to see why small-scale innovations have a very difficult time when someone tries to take them to scale: They then become a threat to certain elements within the political economy. Furthermore, the mechanisms that in other systems tend to promote the automatic spread of innovation (e.g., informed competition, clear output metrics, accountability to clients, good information policy regarding production processes, community overview), in the education sector, are themselves a threat to the status quo.

6. The Requirements of Scale-Up

We conceptualize the scale-up problem in the manner illustrated in Figure 3. Here, we depict education reform as a pocket of good educational practice (e.g., sound teacher-learner interactions, challenging curricula, genuine assessment techniques, good instructional technologies, efficient financing schemes, etc.), the expansion and proliferation of which is obstructed by the plethora of obstacles that were mentioned above. Given this conceptualization of the scale-up problem, it is evident that scale-up broadly requires two things: *space clearing* and *space filling*.

Figure 3. Forces opposing education reforms

We define "space clearing" as those activities that work to overcome the impeding effects of the many obstacles that stand in the way of reform going to scale. These activities would include policy dialogue leading to changes in the legal structure of the system, policy marketing leading to a shared understanding of constraints and options, coalition building leading to a political-economic playing field that is not dominated by one or two powerful actors, networking leading to the development of a reform support infrastructure (see below), consensus generation leading to decisions over certain policy directions, etc.

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"Space filling" means defining and implementing those things that constitute good educational practice. The use of student portfolios, coaching, project learning, the adoption/adaption of whole-school reform models, and site-based school management are but a few space-filling activities.

Despite all the attention that has been paid to "good schooling"over the past 15 years, the U.S. school reform movement has concentrated largely on space-filling activities. Moreover, the existence of the scale-up problem indicates that very little has been done in the way of space clearing. This is not to say that *nothing* has been done with regard to space clearing. As observed earlier, a fair amount of work has been done with regard to both the devolution of authority and the introduction of market forces for reforming America's schools. As a result, legislation in some states allows for some charter schools to exist. The way is being paved for some charter districts. State supreme courts have declared some school systems unconstitutional. Some states are taking over certain urban school districts and creating "super boards" that wield a significant amount of power. And in some instances, existing rules and regulations are simply being ignored.[18] That *some* space has been cleared (in one way or another) accounts for why pockets of reform can be found all over the United States. That the scale-up problem exists as well, tells us that while pockets of education reform may not threaten the status quo, all-out reform does.

Indeed, the U.S. school reform movement will continue to experience some successful replication of certain innovations (e.g., student portfolios). It will continue to see a number of schools and school districts adopting whole-school change models (e.g., New American Schools). It will also see a number of teachers adopting new educational practices (e.g., coaching). Our point, however, is that reformers can, without much space-clearing effort, push the pockets of reform to a theoretical maximum (in terms of both size and number). Concurrently, we maintain that to push reform beyond this point—to effect a wholesale restructuring of the way in which the United States does education—will arouse an opposing force the resistance of which will require an entirely new set of strategies aimed specifically at strategically orchestrating space-filling and space-clearing activities.

Which brings us to the last broad requirement of scale-up: the *creation of a reform support infrastructure*. Common sense tells us that neither space filling nor space clearing will take place on their own accord. Scale-up needs to be purposefully and strategically facilitated. It won't take place unless there is an actor in place whose job is to do it. This actor—the reform support infrastructure—is nothing more than a loosely organized network of individuals (e.g., teachers, consultants, reformers, parents, bureaucrats) and organizations (e.g., teacher training colleges, reform networks, government departments, schools) working together in a coordinated fashion to effect widespread, ongoing, learning-driven reform. This infrastructure is the agent responsible

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[18]When asked by one of the authors how the authorities of Community School District 4, in East Harlem, got New York City to change the rules and regulations necessary for the now-heralded story of District 4 to happen, then-Assistant Superintendent John Falco replied, "We didn't. It was a mutiny."

for expediting the creation of an enabling environment (space clearing) and for fostering enactment of school-level changes within that environment (space filling).

That the U.S. school reform movement has progressed to the stage it has suggests that a number of the tasks that would be carried out by a reform support infrastructure are already being undertaken by various actors operating within the education reform arena: New knowledge is being generated about how children learn, teachers are being trained, state-level leaders are being sensitized to the need for major policy changes, whole-school change is taking place. But because the U.S. school reform movement cannot seem to progress much beyond the "pockets" that were described earlier, it appears, however, that (1) not *all* of the functions of a reform support infrastructure are being carried out, and (2) those that are, are being carried out in a rather haphazard fashion. By way of example, in the first instance we have noted that relatively little is being done in the way of clearing space. In the second instance, we observe scant evidence of a centripetal force (e.g., a vision, approach, or reform effort) that can pull the numerous initiatives that comprise the U.S. school reform movement into the same orbit. In fact, the proliferation of sellers in the education market[19] seems to be further atomizing the overall reform effort. Needed, then, is an approach that can forge a reform support infrastructure and orient it such that it can strategically clear and fill space and so facilitate the scale-up process.

7. Education Reform Support

The notions of clearing space, filling space, and creating a reform support infrastructure, together with the construct of reform that flows from the fundamental features that we presented in Section 4, constitute the operational and conceptual bases, respectively, of an approach to sustainable, sector-wide reform that is called Education Reform Support (ERS).[20] Basically, ERS integrates traditional public policy analysis (using information and analytical techniques) with public policy dialogue, advocacy, awareness and political "salesmanship" (using communication techniques), and institution building.

Moreover, ERS consists of a set of tools and techniques that are, essentially, the means of making ERS, and scale-up, happen. As shown in Box 1, these tools and techniques fall under four major groupings: information and data, analytical approaches, communications, and institutional development. This is, of course, a fairly standard list of tools and techniques. Accordingly, it is not the tools themselves that are new, but rather the context and the manner in which they are used that sheds a new light on the issue of how to effectively deal with the scale-up problem.

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[19]We have been told that in Los Angeles alone, the education market comprises over 20,000 reform "services."

[20]The Education Reform Support approach was developed by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) under the auspices of the Advancing Basic Education and Literacy (ABEL) Project. This project is managed by the Academy for Educational Development and is funded by the United States Agency for International Development. For further information on Education Reform Support, please contact the authors.

Data and information

- Education management information systems (EMIS) for accountability and dialogue
- Survey research and census needs assessment, for analysis and public discussion
- Meetings and discussions for political mapping

Analytical approaches

- Internal efficiency analysis
- External efficiency analysis
- Budgeting and financial analysis
- Analysis of financial transfers and school funding
- Simulation, projection, and planning models
- Analysis of salary scales and cost implications
- Analysis of governance options

Communications

- Policy dialogue
- Policy marketing
- Social marketing
- Advocacy
- Negotiation and mediation
- Public communication campaigns
- Political-economic discourse

Institutional development for analysis, communications, and advocacy

- Networking and coalition building
- Funding of public interest or advocacy groups
- Strategic planning for public sector and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in policy development and policy advocacy
- Environmental mapping/scanning
- Organizational capacity building
- Technology transfer

Box 1. Tools and Techniques for Education Reform Support

Tools and Techniques

A central component of improved policy making; decision making in general; and reform identification, formulation, and management is information deriving from good *data* and sound *analysis*. Accordingly, the tools and techniques for generating good data and performing sound analyses (see Box 1) are key to addressing the scale-up problem. Information can generate demand for change and shape the policy or reform agenda. It can also be used to map out the political-economic environment and so allow reformers to develop strategies aimed at effecting significant changes within that milieu. Information is the basis for weighing reform options and evaluating their implications (financial, institutional, and managerial, as well as psychological). Information provides the means for monitoring and assessing progress of reform implementation, reevaluating options, and indicating where to reorient reform efforts. Information is also the glue

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that binds new coalitions and the lever that can pry legislative change. In addition, information is the basis for reporting, sharing knowledge, extracting lessons, and building additional support.

As noted earlier, policy reform efforts in the past have recognized the centrality of information to the overall reform process, but all too often, they have naively assumed that negative policy environments were the result of policy mistakes, and that good data and analysis—good information—would be sufficient to turn these mistakes around. However, research (and practical experience) tell us that good information is not the only factor that influences policy-makers.[21] Interests (both personal and political), ideology, and institutional structures significantly influence policy decisions as well.[22] Good policy, or scale-up, is therefore constrained more by the characteristics of the policy makers and the process through which they habitually make decisions than by the nature or lack of information. Accordingly, knowledge generation for policy/reform purposes cannot be discussed in the abstract. For information and analysis to have an impact on the overall reform process, it must be purposefully balanced against key stakeholders' political-economic interests, ideologies, and institutional situations.

Specifically, information needs to be strategically packaged and targeted such that it effects positive changes in the status quo of education reform. For example, the parents of young urban schoolchildren need to know (and rally around the fact) that the private rates of return to university education far outweigh the public rates of return, whereas just the opposite is true for primary and most forms of secondary education; and that it therefore makes economic sense (from an efficiency standpoint) to divert a fair amount of state funds away from the post-secondary sector and to channel them in the direction of primary and secondary education. By strategically using information in this manner, reformers will effectively generate demand for that same information (beginning with the university sector, which will surely come up with a counterargument in order to safeguard its interests). In the end, they will raise the informational plane on which reform decisions take place, and better (more informed) decisions will be made.

This process of strategically creating key policy/reform discussions and injecting pertinent information therein is what we refer to broadly as policy *communication*. ERS draws on a number of policy communication tools and techniques that are well-suited for clearing space, filling space, and creating a reform support infrastructure. They include policy dialogue, policy marketing, social marketing, social advertising, advocacy, negotiation and mediation, and consensus building.

Note that data, analysis, and policy communication figure centrally in the development and operation of a reform support infrastructure. First of all, these are the means by which the

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[21]It is for this reason that dissemination strategies, although necessary, are not sufficient to scale up current U.S. school reform efforts.

[22]Carol H. Weiss (1995), "The Four 'I's' of School Reform: How Interests, Ideology, Information, and Institution Affect Teachers and Principals," *Harvard Education Review* 65 (4), pp. 571-592.

constituent members of a reform support infrastructure will join together. Specifically, potential members have to be persuaded that it is in their best interests (and in the interest of education reform in general) to join together. Second, activities in data generation and compilation, analysis, and policy communication constitute much of what a reform support infrastructure actually does as it carries out various space-clearing and space-filling activities. In addition, data, analysis, and policy communication are the tools of strategic management, and without these tools, much of the visioning, learning, and strategy development that are central to clearing space, and filling space, would be difficult to advance.

Institution building, naturally, contributes to the development and operation of a reform support infrastructure as well. Specific techniques as applied to the U.S. school reform environment focus primarily on networking, linkage formation, coalition and partnership building, and consensus generation. The institutions (i.e., the component members of a reform support infrastructure) to which we are referring here can be thought of in three broad categories:

- those that create and maintain an enabling environment for reform (regulatory, legal, and administrative institutions, as well as the institutions that interact, monitor with, or advocate to them),

- those that facilitate an orderly progression of participatory change (democratic institutions and processes), and

- those that support both change and educational processes (the education system, its support institutions, and entities involved in educational change).

When they work together toward a common goal, the resulting entity is what we call a reform support infrastructure.

Various techniques can be applied to help these different actors to strategically coordinate and complement their actions such that they function as a single organism. Of great value are sharing and circulating information; providing venues for interaction; and generating a shared vision, a common understanding, and consensus on issues. Many of these institutional arrangements are built through the strategic use of the information and communication techniques described above.

8. Redefining the Roles of Public and Private Sector Institutions

Accompanying institution building and the creation of a reform support infrastructure is a redefinition of the roles of both public and private sector constituents. That is, a central tenet of ERS is to help public sector entities (departments of education) redefine their roles away from the top-down, command-style, hyper-regulatory, supply-mode approach that currently predominates in many education systems to one that is more open, outwardly accountable, and responsive; and that collaborates with clients in providing education services. In particular, we

are interested in both the degree to which, and the manner in which, education departments at all levels acquire and apply skills regarding data and analysis (information), and communication.

In addition, the education reform community is increasingly recognizing the importance of working through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (i.e., the private sector) not just as implementors but also as important players in shaping policy.[23] The case for working with these institutions has been made both from the perspectives of developing democratic institutions and practices (something which the U.S. education sector desperately needs),[24] and of supporting sustainable reform that benefits the traditionally marginalized segments of the population (e.g., the inner cities and the rural areas).[25] Often these two objectives are seen to be mutually reinforcing, if not inclusive.[26]

Our interest in NGO involvement is based on two strands of thought. One is the NGO-as-policy-actor perspective discussed immediately above. Normally this involvement has been seen as having a basis in democracy, equity, grassroots empowerment, and human rights, but it is increasingly seen as also leading to increased efficiency and social profitability. The other strand of thought is based on the economic and governance reform (sometimes also known as "state modernization") movement, which emphasizes appropriate privatization, decentralization, market forces, provision of full information about prices and markets, targeted but direct subsidies, and indirect rather than direct governmental controls.[27] This perspective has traditionally been seen as interested in efficiency and growth, but is increasingly seen as related to democracy, participation, and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

We are therefore advocating an institution-building approach that focuses on both public sector and private sector capacity in the key areas of policy dialogue, information use, and analysis for

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[23]David L. Brown and David C. Korten (1991), *Working More Effectively with NGOs,* IDR Reports Series, Volume 8, No. 1 (Boston, MA: Institute for Development Research).

[24]See Jane G. Covey (1994), *Accountability and Effectiveness of NGO Policy Alliances,* IDR Reports Series, Volume 11, No. 8 (Boston, MA: Institute for Development Research, December); and Rajesh Tandon (1991), *Civil Society, the State, and Roles of NGOs,* IDR Reports Series, Volume 8, No. 3 (Boston, MA: Institute for Development Research).

[25]See John Clark (1995), "The State, Popular Participation, and the Voluntary Sector," *World Development 23* (4): 593-601; and Valerie Miller (1994), *NGO and Grassroots Policy Influence: What is Success?* IDR Reports Series, Volume 11, No. 5 (Boston, MA: Institute for Development Research).

[26]Lisa Veneklasen (1994), *Building Civil Society: The Role of Development NGOs,* The Civil Society Initiative, Concept Paper No. 1 (Washington, DC: InterAction. December).

[27]For examples, see Robert Klitgaard (1991), *Adjusting to Reality: Beyond "State Versus Market" in Economic Development* (San Francisco, California: ICS Press); and Tarsicio Castañeda (1992), *Combating Poverty: Innovative Social Reforms in Chile During the 1980s* (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies Press).

the development and implementation of education reform. The aim is to work on how public sector education entities define their service provision role and how NGO actors organize to demand and hold government accountable for more democratic and more effective strategies for educational change.

Public Sector Capacity

With regard to public sector capacity, the aim is to improve the ability of various departments of education to open up to participation by other non-governmental agents in policy design and governance, while at the same time assisting the public sector in modernizing so that it can better generate, use, finance, and channel private, market, and lower-tier government energies in civil society. Thus, assessing and nurturing public sector capacity will improve the ability to interact with civil society in the design of policy as well as in the execution of education reform programs.

Simplifying perhaps to the point of caricature, "public sector modernization" holds that the ultimate goal of an efficient and equitable government (with regard to services such as education) should be to create a clear, effective, coherent policy environment, including funding and information policies. That environment would enable individuals, communities, lower-tier governments, cooperative and competitive ventures, and markets to provide for themselves in a manner that maximizes efficiency and socioeconomic equity. We posit this admittedly extreme view to draw out two key points.

Within this view, the two chief domains of a "modern" public sector, with regard to something like education, are information (including technical assistance and technical development) and finance (broadly defined as entering into accountability relations with other agents in society). An accountable government that controls and supplies these two domains will have set up a policy environment in which communities, individuals, and markets will then cooperatively and competitively provide themselves with a set of services consistent with the economy's productive capabilities and with whatever degree of dignity, equity, and protection for the weak is expressed through the political marketplace. We recognize that this is of necessity an oversimplification and somewhat abstract.

However, it serves our purpose in delineating an ultimate vision of the role of a reformed public sector, and it helps identify the areas in which government capacity can be developed (in working toward that vision). Our particular bias, which focuses on information, analysis, and dialogue, not surprisingly accords the most importance to building government capacity in areas related to those functions. As discussed in Section 3, about development project experience, donors have repeatedly provided assistance in the name of building information and analysis capacity of ministries of education. Too often neglected in this area are issues such as: how information gets distributed; whether it is available to stakeholders; what the sources of data are; whether more than one perspective may be represented; how information is used in dialogue with communities and their representatives; whether government officials meet with civil-society stakeholders and

base discussions on information and analysis; and whether government officials (e.g., inspectors, regional or district advisors) act as true information brokers or extension agents.

Ultimately, the role of government institutions is to provide an enabling environment for broader stakeholder involvement in the policy process. Without a rule of law based somewhat on democratic, liberal, and pluralistic principles, it would be difficult for communities, individuals, and markets to function so as to bring problems and potential solutions to the policy-making table. Further, within the framework of the rule of law, the government has to develop capacity to proactively seek stakeholder input and to effectively decentralize decision making (by enabling what Maclure[28] defines as "a wider representation of legitimate interests" in the public education system.

Nongovernmental Capacity

Traditionally NGOs (e.g., reform networks, private sector service vendors) have been thought of as alternative service providers, often seen as a more efficient or effective mechanism for channeling resources to needy populations. It has become increasingly clear that because of their links to grassroots stakeholders, their ability to act flexibly, and their capacity to innovate and experiment in ways government agencies find difficult, NGOs have some of the basic characteristics that lend themselves to effective policy advocacy. Helping NGOs better exploit these strengths constitutes an essential element of ERS.

For private sector actors to have an effective voice in the education sector, for that voice to credibly represent stakeholder interests, and for popular demand to begin to create pressure on public sector institutions to be accountable for policy choices, there needs to be a *critical mass*. By critical mass we mean a sufficient number of credible institutions involved in policy issues in the sector. However, large numbers of individual NGOs alone would not constitute that mass. An institutional framework for those NGOs also must develop: an umbrella organization, a sectoral network, a collaborative structure of some kind—a reform support infrastructure.

Effective voice also derives from the information and communication skills of civic society institutions. To effectively influence policy, mobilized public opinion must be accompanied by convincing analysis that can be pitted against the analyses of decision makers or entrenched interest groups. Furthermore, private sector actors must be able to document and analyze their own concrete experiences if they are to bring to the public debate alternative perspectives on issues and demonstrated innovations in service approaches.[29]

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[28]Maclure (1993), *Decentralization and Participation as Tenets of School Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Consideration of Assumptions* (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: University of Ottawa).

[29]Maclure (1993).

- In addition to analysis, the capacity to present findings in a persuasive manner is basic to an institution's ability to influence policy. This type of presentation entails skills such as analyzing stakeholder positions on an issue, understanding the audience one is trying to persuade, choosing the correct forum and format for presenting information, and pursuing alliances and networks for touching multiple audiences. Capacity and willingness to negotiate are also important skills.

NGOs that are able to use strategic planning techniques for organizing their efforts will be more effective advocates. Case studies of successful NGO policy advocacy efforts underline the importance of focusing policy goals, identifying alliances, choosing multiple advocacy targets, and in general having a coherent strategy for taking on a set of issues.[30] At the same time, participatory planning techniques and community organizing skills are essential to ensure that an organization incorporates the interests of the constituency it is purporting to represent. That is, the planning should be strategic as well participatory. The development of mechanisms for internal accountability—reporting, election of officers—serves the same objective.

One of the keys to improving service provision, particularly in situations of natural monopoly (almost unavoidable in rural schooling), is to increase the "voice" capacity of those being served.[31] In fact, some would go so far as to maximize voice by having the services, in some meaningful fashion, run by those whom they serve. This would be a fairly extreme version of decentralization of governance. Without going to extremes, however, NGOs can play a useful role both at the macro level, through state and national-level policy dialogue that opens up the system to local voice,[32] and at the micro level, by demonstrating and training communities in exercising their voice options.

Education stakeholders have a vested interest in how the education system is organized and administered, how sector priorities are set, and how resources are mobilized and used for schooling. Ultimately, everyone in a particular society is a stakeholder in the education system. However, not all education stakeholders require assistance in getting a seat at the policy dialogue table. Education reform initiatives challenge vested interests, both within society and within the very government institutions that are expected to make changes occur. Our basic assumption here is that the dominance of vested interests must be counterbalanced by an increase in the level of participation (in terms of numbers and significance of their input) of groups that support reform or that stand to benefit from it.

A stakeholder group's involvement in the policy process is measured by the extent to which its priorities for the sector are taken seriously by those setting and implementing state and local

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[30]Maclure (1993)

[31]Samuel Paul (1992), "Accountability in Public Services: Exit, Voice, and Control," *World Development 20* (7).

[32]The Education Commission of the States, an NGO, operates largely in this way.

education policy. When stakeholder groups can make their agenda an *unavoidable* factor in policy decision making, they are not only present at the "policy table," but also heard.

Our perspective differs somewhat from more standard treatments of nongovernmental involvement in the development process. Participation has often meant one of two things. On the one hand, local actors are encouraged to play a greater part in the implementation of some program (through resource support or local management).[33] On the other, "beneficiaries" are consulted regarding project design or are asked to evaluate the impact of certain interventions.[34] These types of participation may certainly improve the relevance and efficiency of reform endeavors. ERS, however, views stakeholders not so much as people who supply inputs to the reform process, but rather as actors who set the reform agenda. ERS is, therefore, predicated on building local nongovernmental (and governmental) capacity to support the processes of reform.

9. Conclusion

The process of education reform is inherently difficult, messy, and long term. The framework presented in this paper is not intended to render systematic and "planned" what is inherently unsystematic. The intention of this work is to help those who support education reform to find a more systematic approach that will better enable them to respond to, make use of, and orient the unpredictable gyrations of the reform process.

At this juncture, a significant challenge for U.S. education reform efforts is to redefine the nature of appropriate and effective relationships among the different levels of an education system, and between the state and civil society. The current political environment and the cumulative lessons of education reform give credence to the value of local control. The emerging issue, therefore, is fast becoming one of helping states define a policy role that is enabling and supportive of local initiatives (i.e., clearing space). What will be the forms of policy that eschew prescription, over-regulation and micro-management; that instead emphasize coherent expectations, incentives, and consequences for performance; and that invite stakeholder input? Further, how can we support reform efforts in a manner that legitimizes and builds capacity for greater stakeholder involvement? We hope that the framework for Education Reform Support will provide some of the elements needed to navigate that challenge.

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[33]Mark Bray (1994), "Community Financing of Education: Rationales, Mechanisms, and Policy Implications in Less-Developed Countries," paper presented at a workshop on Financing Education and Health in Developing Countries, University of Sussex, UK.

[34]Lawrence Salmen (1987), *Listen to the People: Participant-Observer Evaluation for Development Projects* (New York: Oxford University Press).